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### 13.Numerical Structure of Jotham's Fable in Judges 9

Labuschagne, C.J.

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### 13. Numerical Structure of Jotham's Fable in Judges 9:8-15

Jotham's obliquely expressed criticism is formulated in an intricately structured composition in which the name of the useless king is numerically hidden in the text.

- 8 הָלוֹךְ הָלְכוּ הָעֵצִים לְמִשְׁחָה עֲלֵיהֶם מֶלֶךְ  
וַיֹּאמְרוּ לַעֲזֹת מֶלֶכָה עָלֵינוּ:
- 9 וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם הַזֹּאת  
הַחֲדֹלְתִּי אֶת־דִּשְׁנִי אֲשֶׁר־בִּי וַיִּכְבְּרוּ אֱלֹהִים וְאָנָשִׁים  
וַתִּלְכְּתִי לָנוּעַ עַל־הָעֵצִים:
- 10 וַיֹּאמְרוּ הָעֵצִים לַתְּאֵנָה לִכִּי־אֵת מֶלֶכִּי עָלֵינוּ:
- 11 וַתֹּאמֶר לָהֶם הַתְּאֵנָה  
הַחֲדֹלְתִּי אֶת־מִתְקִי וְאֶת־הַנוֹבְתִי הַטּוֹבָה  
וַתִּלְכְּתִי לָנוּעַ עַל־הָעֵצִים:
- 12 וַיֹּאמְרוּ הָעֵצִים לַגֶּפֶן לִכִּי־אֵת מֶלֶכִּי עָלֵינוּ:
- 13 וַתֹּאמֶר לָהֶם הַגֶּפֶן  
הַחֲדֹלְתִּי אֶת־תִּירוֹשֵׁי הַמְּשַׁמֵּחַ אֱלֹהִים וְאָנָשִׁים  
וַתִּלְכְּתִי לָנוּעַ עַל־הָעֵצִים:
- 14 וַיֹּאמְרוּ כָל־הָעֵצִים אֶל־הָאֶטֶר לֵךְ אֵתָּה מֶלֶךְ־עָלֵינוּ:
- 15 וַיֹּאמֶר הָאֶטֶר אֶל־הָעֵצִים  
אִם בְּאַמְנַת אַתֶּם מְשֻׁחִים אֵתִי לְמֶלֶךְ עָלֵיכֶם  
בְּאוֹ חֶסֶד בְּצִלִּי וְאִם־אֵין תֵּצֵא אִשׁ מִן־תְּאֵטֶר  
וְתֹאכַל אֶת־אֶרְצִי הַלְבֹּנוֹן:

Verse	Total	Narrative	Introduction	"All Trees"	"Separate trees"
8	10	6	2+	2	
9	15		3+		Olive 12+
10	7		3+	4	
11	13		3+		Fig 10+
12	7		3+	4	
13	13		3 = 17		Vine 10=32
14	9		5+	4	
15	24		4 = 9		Buckthorn 20
8-15	98 (2x49)	6	13 + 13 = 26	14	52 (2x26)

- The number **98**, which is 2 x **49**, represents the name of Abimelech by means of its numerical value, **49** (1 + 2 + 10 + 13 + 12 + 11 = **49**).
- The formulas introducing the speeches have altogether **26** words: **13** for all trees and **13** for the separate trees. Moreover, there are **17** words used in connection with the olive tree, the fig tree and the vine, and **9** with reference to the useless buckthorn.
- The words in the four speeches by the individual trees amount to **52** (2x**26**).
- Note that the buckthorn needs no less than 20 words to promote his candidature!
- The three useful trees speak altogether **32** words – representing God's *kabod*.